



March 3, 2025

Honourable Brendan Maguire
Minister of Advanced Education
PO Box 395
Halifax, NS
B3J 2P8

Email:

Dear Minister,

As president of the Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers (ANSUT), I write to you on behalf of our 1,300 members to express our dismay at the recent introduction of Bill 12. ANSUT represents faculty at the majority of Nova Scotia's universities, and provides its member Associations with the strongest possible voice on post-secondary education issues in the province of Nova Scotia.

As you are aware, this bill gives you, as Minister of Advanced Education, unprecedented power to appoint the majority of members to university Boards, dictate that research align with government priorities, and provide unchecked authority to force universities into a revitalization process.

When the *Universities Accountability and Sustainability Act* was first introduced in 2015, ANSUT representatives spoke against it, arguing that “the Act stands to put institutions of higher learning at the behest of large-scale industry and business, destroy collective bargaining, undermine bicameral university governance, and, despite all that, entirely fail to provide the financial accountability that universities actually need: oversight measures designed to ensure that the core academic mission of universities is not shortchanged in the name of short-term economic targets”.

Others spoke against the Act also. One speaker in particular spoke about the danger of the unspecified revitalization plan, saying:


- “The framework for a crisis actually exists within this bill.”
- “Giving up your intellectual property objectives or the freedom of intellectual property” is “something we should be very careful of.”
- “These are risks when we say that the government of the day - whatever day that happens to be, whatever government that happens to be - is going to dictate the terms of the revitalization plan in terms of making sure that the universities are doing things that meet that government's objectives. That's a dangerous thing particularly when you consider that it can be triggered by the government itself to begin with.”

- “There is great potential in universities creating quality research, and I don't think anybody in this Chamber wants to see that potential diminished. I don't know that there's a role for government to be reaching into that system and dictating where that research should be going. I think that's something that's better left to minds more creative than many of the members in this Chamber”

That speaker was Premier Tim Houston. We were grateful to have Mr. Houston, and several of his PC colleagues use the Law Amendments Committee as a tool to argue against the dangers inherent in Bill 100. But it does cause me to wonder why, now that the PC government is in power, you seek to, not rescind this act, but increase the danger by creating a document that gives you full control of Boards of Governors, research and financial exigency.

I ask your government to reconsider adopting this bill, or at least slow the pace, and allow for much needed input and thoughtful consideration of the potential damage it could cause to our post-secondary education sector. ANSUT representatives would like to meet with you to share our concerns, and offer suggestions for changes to the bill that would enable accountability and sustainability without such dire consequences for our beloved institutions of higher learning.

Regards,



Dr. Scott Stewart
ANSUT President